The National Flag

Reg. No. B3092

HARIJAN

12 Pages

Editor PYARELAL

VOL. XI. No. 27 AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 1947 TWO ANNAS

HINDI *V.* HINDUSTANI

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Shrimati Perinbehn Captain writes:

"It was with shame, disgust and sorrow that I heard on the Delhi radio that our own group of men wished to dethrone our national language for which we have been struggling all these years. The deepest cut is that Congressmen of standing should be so blinded by prevailing passions as to break the very thing which all Congressmen have cherished and worked for. One would have thought that at least some statesmanship might have remained amongst our so-called bigger leaders. Please write to me fully what you would like: (1) Our Hindustani Committee to do, (2) our honest and self-sacrificing Hindustani *pracharaks* to do, and (3) last but not least, those of our countrymen — Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, Christians and Jews, who have accepted and love Hindustani as understood by the Congress resolution, to do.

"I know you must be busy, but still please do give some time to this question, as I think that this is one of the strong links, which may in happier times bring back the oneness of our beloved country as we have envisaged it and for which we have worked all our life. Yesterday about 25 young men from one of our classes came to me and asked why some narrow-minded men should coerce them into a narrow groove when they loved Hindustani and the beauty of both forms of literature and its national value. Please try and prevent our friends from losing their vision through hatred and thereby losing all hopes of linking in true friendship and love the whole country from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Assam to Sind."

This represents the common grief of many nationalists like her, labelled Congressmen or not. Since this letter was written the threat has been postponed for two months or until such time as the Constituent Assembly meets again. It is a wise postponement which gives time for passions to cool down in order to allow clear thinking.

Let the Hindus, by their conduct, direct or indirect, disprove the Muslim League statement that we, the Hindus and the Muslims of India, are not one nation but two and that too because of our respective religions. Congressmen have declared from the very inception of the Congress that India is one nation composed of men belonging to all religions and sects known in the world and it has proved the claim often enough at crucial moments in spite of many lapses which it would be easy to fling in its face.

Dadabhai Naoroji, whose grand-daughter has written the above letter with so much feeling, has become and still remains the only Grand Old Man of India.

Pherozeshah Mehta became the uncrowned king of the Bombay Presidency and after Dadabhai Naoroji's death ruled the Congress by right of service unselfishly rendered.

Who was Budruddin Tyebjee — at one time President of the Congress? Was he not a Musalman every inch of him? Was he any the less an Indian? India has many religions but only one nationality and this, I dare to say, in spite of its two divisions. They may persist for a long time, but we must not be enemies one of the other for a single minute. It takes two to make a quarrel; but friendship does not require reciprocity. That which requires reciprocity is a bargain. This friendship, otherwise called love or non-violence, belongs not to the cowardly but to the brave and the seeing.

I entirely endorse Perinbehn's remark that not Hindi, highly Sanskritized written in the *Nagari* character nor Urdu, highly Persianized written in the *Urdu* character can ever be the link between two or more communities in India. It can only be Hindustani which is a fusion of the two forms robbed of their artificial character and written either in the *Nagari* or the *Urdu* character. This natural fusion has been going on for many years and like all natural processes, it has been slow but none the less sure. It does not matter to me whether my Muslim brother reciprocates or not, by trying to understand my form of speech or writing; but surely I am richer by endeavouring to understand his form of speech and writing. Speaking to many Muslim divines I have not found it difficult to explain my meaning through Hindustani though I have never attempted to pretend to speak their highflown Persianized Urdu. They have as a rule been the losers and I invariably the gainer. What is true of me is true, I am sure, of many more.

Now about her main questions:

Every member of the Hindustani Committee is to live up to his creed, that is to say, he or she should himself or herself master both the scripts and be familiar with a mixture of the two forms, Hindi and Urdu. This will happen when both are diligently studied in their simple forms. And when this first requisite is fulfilled, he or she must try to induce others to acquire the knowledge.

Secondly, if the Hindustani *pracharaks* are honest and self-sacrificing they are bound to infect their surroundings with the spirit that actuates them.

Thirdly, those who have accepted Hindustani as the national language of the whole of India and love it, have to prove their acceptance by speaking and writing only in Hindustani, when it is meant for those who do not know the mother-tongue. Thus a Tamilian will speak only in Tamil to a fellow Tamilian, but with a non-Tamilian he will make use of Hindustani and not English as is now the wont.

New Delhi, 25-7-'47

GANDHIJI'S SPEECHES

New, Delhi, 20-7-'47

DON'T CRY OVER SPILT MILK

Gandhiji said that some friends were insistently telling him that his post-prayer discourses were having a depressant effect on the people in general. After all the freedom for which he had fought all his life was at their door. He knew that there could be no economic freedom or moral betterment without political freedom. Therefore, why did he not rejoice ? Gandhiji said that there was some force in this argument. But as a *satyagrahi* wedded to Truth, he could never say what did not come from the depths of his heart. The partition of India was there and he could not but be unhappy about it. If, however, what he said depressed them the fault was not his. He had told them that it was no use crying over spilt milk. He had been a rebel and a fighter all his life and had found great happiness therein. But he had never been defeated in spirit. He could not weep nor could he make others do so. He had gone to Noakhali to wipe their tears and tell them not to mourn over the loss of life and property. A *satyagrahi* knew no defeat. Even if their leaders had made a mistake, there was no consciousness about it. They believed that what they had done was for the good of the country. If they were happy, the audience too felt likewise. It was no part of his duty to seek to deprive them of their happiness. If the Congress decided on celebrations on August 15th, those who felt like joining must join in them. Congress, as a democratic organization, was never going to force anyone to do anything against his or her wishes. It was true that the British were going. Those few who remained would remain as their servants to do their bidding. Gandhiji brought home to the audience the difference between gaining a victory as Congress had done through passive resistance and that gained by armed force. Now power was going to be in their hands. But the real day of rejoicing would be when the Hindus and the Muslims would live as brothers, even though in the two dominions. He was distressed to hear that the Punjab Muslim League were holding out threats of violence if the decision of the Boundary Commission went against their wishes. Some Sikhs had said likewise. Gandhiji deplored this attitude. It was inconsistent with the honour of the parties who had agreed to arbitration. Having agreed they must conform to the decision.

THE TRAGEDY OF BURMA

He then referred to the terrible tragedy of Burma. It was incredible that the very people who had fought for Burma's freedom and had brought her to its threshold should have been murdered thus in cold blood by assassins. He knew Burma and her people fairly well. They had taken Buddhism from this country. They had been made part of us by the British, but they had now elected to remain separate. Nevertheless, they were our neighbours with close cultural ties. It was sad that the followers of Lord Buddha should resort to such mad violence. He hoped that India would learn a lesson from the sad happening which was a tragedy not only for Burma but for Asia and the whole world. He was afraid that it was not ordinary murder, but there was political ambition behind the act. Such doings had become part and parcel of political strife the world over and it did not augur well for the future of humanity. He referred to the barbarities in India and pointed a warning finger and hoped that they would desist from following the path of mutual destruction. He sympathized with the relations of the murdered leaders and with the Government of Burma and asked the audience to pray with him that God would change the hearts of those who had committed those murders for the attainment of their ends. What was needed was not the dagger and the pistol but the play of reason for change of heart that would rid men's minds of the lust for blood.

WELCOME CHANGE

Lastly, Gandhiji said with pleasure that two of his suggestions had commended themselves to the editor of the *Dawn*. The latter had assured him through the columns of his paper that all minorities would be well-treated and perfectly safe in Pakistan and that they too wanted all to live together as brothers.

His second suggestion regarding the getting of news published had also been accepted. The editor had appealed to Gandhiji as a journalist to take up the task of initiating a committee. The speaker said that he had not the time and his movements were uncertain. But there was no reason whatsoever why other journalists should not be approached to the end proposed.

He longed for the day when minorities everywhere could say that they were equally safe and happy whether in Pakistan or in the Indian Union. Then only, in his opinion, would there be real freedom and cause for rejoicing.

New Delhi, 21-7-'47

CELEBRATIONS ON AUGUST 15TH

A non-Muslim friend living in the Pakistan area writes :

> " You people are talking loud about the celebration of 15th August next as the Independence Day. Have you thought how we, the non-Muslims of Pakistan, are to celebrate the day and with what joy in our hearts ? We here shall be afraid about

our own safety when you might be rejoicing. Can you direct us as to what we might do? Can it be a day of anything but mourning? Our Muslim neighbours have begun to put fright into our hearts from now! What will the Muslims of the Indian Union be thinking? Are they not likely to share the same fright? We are frightened to such an extent that we feel we are in danger of compulsory conversion to Islam. It is all very well for you to preach courage and to prattle that everyone's religion is in his own keeping. It may be true of *sanyasis*, not of poor house-holders having children."

All I can answer is that Jinnah Saheb has now become the Governor-General of Pakistan. As such he says that the non-Muslims in Pakistan will be treated precisely in the same manner as their Muslim brethren. My advice is that we should trust the word and believe that no harm will come to the non-Muslims in that part of India as none will befall the Muslims in the Indian Union. Now we have two States in India. Therefore, I think that each will have to be responsible to the other for the due protection of the minorities.

This much I certainly believe that the coming 15th August should be no day for rejoicing whilst the minorities contemplate the day with a heavy heart. It must be a day for prayer and deep heart-searching. There is one condition on which it might become a day of universal rejoicing in spite of the two divisions. Let both try from now onwards to become true friends so that they are ready on the 15th August to give themselves to rejoicing. This, however, is an opinion confined to me alone.

SHELTER FOR REFUGEES

The same friend asks whether those who, being mortally afraid, leave Pakistan, will get shelter in the Union.

My opinion is emphatic on the point. Such refugees should get proper shelter in the Union and vice versa. Of course, the rich ones may not expect palatial buildings in the Union. I have not seen that done anywhere. I further believe that the refugees should work against food being given to them. No work, no payment. I hug the hope that no non-Muslim will have to leave Pakistan and no Muslim the Union.

The friend again asks: "What will happen about land and buildings, if any, left in Pakistan."

I have said repeatedly that the State should pay the present market price of the land and buildings. So far as I know it is customary for the rival State to ensure such payment. But let us hope that matters will never have to go so far.

PUNISHMENT FOR EVIL-DOERS

Lastly, the same writer says: "You regard yourself as a practical idealist. What is happening today is inhuman. Will you tell me how your practical *ahimsa* can work against these evil-doers?"

I must plead guilty to having called myself a practical idealist. I have tried ever to practise as I have preached, be it ever so imperfectly. Who are the evil-doers of your conception? Are they as described by the Sage Manu? All these are not today done to death. Today there is a movement on foot in the world for the abolition of capital punishment. Indeed, an attempt, worthy in my opinion, is being made to convert prisons into hospitals and reformatories for the treatment of criminals as if they were diseased persons. The upshot of all I want to convey is that every work labelled as scripture is not necessarily so. Moreover a scripture to be scientific lends itself to emendations as the times may really require. They must progress with the times if they are to live in the lives of the people. The changeless and universal fundamentals are always very few. They do not require learned treatises to be described. The treatises are built upon these immovable rocks.

Further, it is not everyone who is entitled to punish evil-doers. In a decent society it is always reserved for the State. It enacts laws and appoints judges to judge in accordance with them. If such were not the case, we would all bid fair to become evil-doers. The assassinations in Burma were truly fearful. Now we know for certain that the motive behind them was political. I am quite sure that the assassins believed that they were doing a virtuous act in murdering those patriots whom they regarded as evil-doers. Did not our terrorists think likewise? They told me that they sincerely believed that those whom they did to death were evil-doers of Manu's description. These friends never thought until they had seen new light, that they had done anything wrong in shooting their victims. Hence have I argued that those who take the law into their own hands and presume to judge others are themselves the guilty ones. Departure from *ahimsa* is possible, if at all, when justice is awarded by properly constituted impartial tribunals. What is happening today comes under the definition of evil.

New Delhi, 22-7-'47

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji referred to a letter that he had received that day. The writer had taken Gandhiji to task for lavishing unwarranted praise on the Viceroy. He reminded Gandhiji of his speech at the Second Round Table Conference in which he had declared that in a free India the Viceroy's House would lodge Harijan and other poor patients. Gandhiji said that he never lavished unwarranted praise on anybody. In fact the charge against him was that he was unnecessarily hard on his friends. The Viceroy Lord Mountbatten was asked to stay on as the Governor-General so that he might see to the proper delivery of his charge. He was trying his best to wash off the sins of the past.

So far as Gandhiji was concerned, he would gladly invite the Viceroy to come and stay in the Bhangi Colony. But that was hardly practicable in view of the work he had to do. Whether the Viceroy's House would be converted into a hospital or not was a question which he could not answer. The members of the Union Government could answer it. It was not an easy matter to shift high personages without extra cost.

(Continued on p. 262)

HARIJAN

August 3 1947

THE NATIONAL FLAG

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

The National Flag by the very name was accepted by the nation functioning through the Congress in 1921. Those, therefore, who say that the flag that was at one time the Congress Flag has now become the National Flag of India are wrong. By making an unnecessary fuss over what they only now call the National Flag, albeit unknowingly, they insult the Congress. The Congress has been national from its very birth in 1885. It has never represented a party, but by it have been represented all parties and all Indians. Of course, it is open to this great national organization any day to commit suicide by becoming a party machine. The calamity may overtake it if God's wrath descends upon it. Nevertheless, many will be praying that such a misfortune may never befall it. Is it possible that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's taunt, that the Congress is national only in name but essentially Hindu in action, will ever prove true ?

Here, however, let us confine ourselves to the Flag. What has happened is that, having been party to the two divisions of India, the Congress has nevertheless delivered it from the British domination and has taken over the largest part from them. Therefore, a *swadeshi* Government will henceforth function under a flag under which the Congress has fought without violence many a battle against the British power. I see nothing to gloat over in this display of the flag. The joy and the excitement that accompany the stages in the ascent of the Himalayas, giving one a variegated and picturesque view, are not to be enjoyed on reaching the top. That no one has yet succeeded in making that goal merely illustrates the truth that the goal is ever in sight but never reached and the joy consists in the attempt.

On the 13th day of April, 1921, I wrote an article for *Young India* which I re-read today before writing this article. I advise every reader to glance through that article. It is reproduced in this issue. The improved condition of the Flag has value only if it answers the significance attached to the original. If it does not, it is valueless in my estimation. There is reason for this caution.

Some say that the original has vanished for ever. A new generation has begun and with it have come new and befitting conceptions. I have not yet known a worthy son for whom age has disfigured his mother. It is conceivably possible to gild pure gold, but the son is yet to be born who would embellish his parent. Hence, in my opinion nothing would have been lost if our councillors had never thought of interfering with the design of the original flag. In defence of the improvement some say that "the spinning wheel was an old woman's solace and Gandhi's toy; but *swaraj* does not belong to old women. It belongs to the warriors and, therefore, we want Ashoka's disc mounted with lions and if the lions do not adorn the disc of the flag, the omission is merely for the sake of art; they cannot be accommodated on it, but we will not be satisfied until they have found a place on the disc somewhere. We have had enough of cowardliness. Nobody has yet had the experience of the non-violence of the brave. We shall talk about it when we see it. This we know that only the lion is the undisputed king of forest life. Sheep and goats are his food. We are tired of wearing *khadi* in this age of advance. We have beautiful cloth made of glass. Our forefathers used cloth as a protection against wind and rain. Now we use cloth as ornamentation; therefore, it should be so transparent as to show to advantage every limb of the body. Then the improved flag has no need of *khadi*. We do not want to disfigure with *khadi* the shop windows of our towns. Surely, it should be counted as creditable for us when we do not regard it criminal for the villagers to wear *khadi* and for old women to ply the wheel in their humble cottages."

I would refuse to salute the flag that bears the foregoing interpretation, however artistic it may appear.

Another group of interpreters says: The new flag is merely an improvement upon the original. The spinning wheel has its undoubted honoured place on it. The wheel on the improved pattern, bereft of the spindle and the *mal*, may not be counted as a defect, if it is purely due to the exigencies of art. After all every picture has to leave something for the imagination. The spinning wheel in a picture has no slivers with the spinners at work on it. These are left for the imagination to fill in. This rule applies as well to the improved edition of the original. Thus conceived, the improvement must appear purely innocent to an unbiased mind. This tricolour flag with the wheel will certainly consist of hand-spun and hand-woven *khadi*. Our country has called it *khadi* whether it is woven from hand-spun cotton or silk. When the original conception is kept intact no one has the right to cavil at a touch of art. We must not be deliberately inartistic. When the country was at war with a foreign power the fact of being so engaged was in itself a work of art. Now that it has ended in success, there must be place for art though, perhaps, of a lower type, yet quite useful in order to perpetuate the memory of the valour, such as is open to a weak nation. If any further but not inconsistent interpretations are added to this indispensable interpretation, the additions will certainly be harmless. It is undoubtedly open to a rich mind to see in the same colours a subtle meaning. Unity of design lies in the diversity of colours in the whole universe. Some will recall through the wheel the name of that Prince of Peace, Ashoka, the founder of an

empire, who ultimately gave up the pomp and circumstance of power to become the undisputed Emperor of the hearts of men and became the representative of all the then known faiths. We would call it a legitimate interpretation of the wheel to seek in it the Wheel of Law ascribed to that living store of mercy and love.

The spinning wheel thus interpreted adds to its importance in the life of billions of mankind. To liken it to and to derive it from the Ashoka disc is to recognize in the insignificant-looking *charkha* the necessity of obeying the ever-moving Wheel of the Divine Law of Love.

New Delhi, 27-7-'47

(*Translated from the original in Gujarati*)

SCHEDULED CASTES

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

A correspondent writes:

> " If the Scheduled Castes of x area are included in Pakistan, they would probably have no alternative other than embracing Islam."

The correspondent is well-educated and is an M. L. A. The question immediately arises as to what will happen to the Scheduled Caste members in the Pakistan areas where they are not living in contiguous areas. Will they all have to embrace Islam? I can only say that their religion must be very poor stuff, if it admits of change like one's clothes. Religion (binding faith) is made of sterner stuff; it is a deep personal matter, more personal than honour. To be true, it must be able to defy coercion of the extremest type.

So much for those who are in fear of compulsory conversion. But what about those who inspire men and women with such fear? I have heard it seriously argued that people have often mistaken voluntary for compulsory conversion. I think the argument does not carry any conviction. People have been known in all ages to resort to conversion when they have known their friends, relations or neighbours to profess conversion under duress. When, therefore, there is suspicion all round, conversion should be stopped altogether. Here I remind myself of the argument of the correspondent used only the other day that my " brave " words about personal religion would be alright if they were confined to *sanyasis* but not to house-holders who were exposed to a variety of temptations from life. Though I do not endorse this argument, for it weakens those on whose behalf it is led, I cannot help feeling that there is considerable force in it, especially when it is made applicable to members of the Scheduled Castes who have been ill-treated by their fellow Hindus and would, therefore, yield to compulsion in the hope of avoiding ill-treatment from their fellows who arrogate to themselves superiority, falsely so-called. Frequently this compulsion assumes subtle forms, as for instance, free grants of land or offer of service even beyond merit.

New Delhi, 25-7-'47

NOTES

A Terrible Contrast

Prof. Kumarappa is at present in London. From his letter received from there I quote the following extracts:

> " The air travel, as I explained to you, is extremely dull as the sense of motion that we get on surface travel is practically absent. From our height you can see nothing but the bare red earth with some streaks indicating rivers. Trees etc. are not visible except as clumps of grass here and there.
>
> * * *
>
> " Last evening I strolled all over Marble Arch, Hyde Park, Kensington, Westminster, Whitehall, James Park, Piccadilly, Bond Street etc. clad in my *dhotijamma*. London is hot even for that. Our old time London of plenty and pleasure seems to have undergone a radical change. There seems to be very effective rationing in which a great deal of credit should be given to the willing co-operation of the public in restraining themselves in the interests of all. This is in striking contrast to our lack of a public conscience. I used to think the efficiency of rationing here was a credit to the efficiency of the government machinery here. But I think now that it is largely due to public self-control that even black markets are not able to hold their own. Our culture, though based on self-discipline and self-control, has to extend its influence to public behaviour. This should be the foundation of our *Swaraj*. "

Assuming the correctness of the information the writer gives, the contrast, between willing co-operation in London and the black marketing with all its implications here, is terrible.

New Delhi, 22-7-'47 M. K. G.

Congressmen and Constructive Work

An English friend, who came to India years ago and has identified herself with Gandhiji's constructive programme, writes to Gandhiji:

> " As to Congressmen, this is a subject which pains me to the bottom of my heart. So painful have been my experiences that I have come to the stage when I prefer to lead a lonely life and render such service as I can. Everywhere I see a bid for power. There are honourable exceptions. But I remember your saying years ago that power corrupts and that the function of a non-violent organization should be to send people to power, not to seek it themselves. But the old ideals seem to have gone, just at the very moment when India could have risen as a guiding star to save the world from blind self-destruction. "

A Congressman came to Gandhiji the other day asking him how he would re-organize the Congress under the new set-up. Gandhiji was emphatic that if the Congress was to live as a potent force, it must become a body of constructive workers. Constructive work, he knew, had never been over-popular. He thought that it was never more necessary than now. Without the backing of constructive work and penetrating the villages, their legislators would practically be idle and the voters

would be exposed to the machinations of the vote-catchers. The labour vote would presently be a drop in the ocean in the face of adult suffrage both for men and women. It was probably the boldest experiment known to the world on a vast scale. Unless it was well-planned and all attendant dangers anticipated and provided against, adult suffrage might well prove a deluge drowning the whole country. He (Gandhiji) knew nothing so effective for the purpose as a well thought out constructive programme.

New Delhi, 26-7-'47 S. N.

GANDHIJI'S SPEECHES

(Continued from p. 259)

ARMY AND FREEDOM

Another friend had also asked if the division of the army and the retention of British Officers had Gandhiji's approval. The friend should first ask whether Gandhiji approved of the army at all. As it was, the military expenditure in free India would probably be more, not less, than before. Gandhiji could never be a party to it. He viewed the military with apprehension. Could it be that India would also have to pass through the stage of military rule? For years they had said that they did not want any army. He stood by that statement even today, but the others did not. A new generation had set in. Congressmen were not bound by what they had done during India's bondage. No blame could be imputed to them for the change. He had mistaken passive resistance for non-violence. There was violence in people's hearts. The British Government's imminent withdrawal had set free the bottled violence which was finding free vent against their own kith and kin. Almost every province wanted military assistance. If they did not wake up betimes, there was even danger of military dictatorship being established. Was that freedom?

NATIONAL FLAG

Four sisters who were members of the Constituent Assembly had come to him this afternoon to offer congratulations on the fact that the Congress flag had become the National Flag. He was told that Khaliquzzaman Saheb and Sadulla Saheb had associated themselves with the ceremony. It was a good omen. Others had condoled with him that there was no *charkha* in the flag and that *khadi* was banished. Others again held that the *charkha* was represented by the wheel on the white surface. If the flag truly represented their feeling i. e., if the *charkha* and *khadi* were in their hearts, it was well. If not, the flag had no value for him.

GOONDAISM IN SYLHET

He had received a telegram from Sylhet that after the referendum terrorism had become rampant there. The Nationalist Muslims were being harassed. They had asked him to send someone to study the situation and bring him first-hand information. That was the job of the Congress President or the Government. He would say this to the people of Sylhet that his heart was with them. When he went to Noakhali, he would surely visit Sylhet if required.

He had received another letter too in which it was stated that some Muslims got down from the railway train and created mischief, which ultimately led to arson and loot. A whole Harijan village was practically destroyed. He hoped these reports had given an exaggerated account of the real situation. If there was any truth, the situation demanded serious attention. Pakistan and the Indian Union were both being weighed in the balance. Let them take care that they were not found wanting. They should pray to God to enable them to taste the sweet fruit of Independence. He was all powerful. He could change the hearts of men and bring real peace among them.

New Delhi, 23-7-'47

SEEING GOD FACE TO FACE

Before the prayers started, some one passed a note to Gandhiji. In it the writer had asked him whether he had seen God face to face. Answering the question after prayers, Gandhiji said that he had not seen God face to face. If he had, he would have no need to be speaking to them. His thought would be potent enough to render speech and action on his part unnecessary. But he had an undying faith in the existence of God. Millions all over the world shared that faith with him. The most learned could not shake the faith of the illiterate millions. The *bhajan* sung during the prayer described the way to see God face to face. The poet asked the aspirant to shed anger and desire and to be indifferent to praise or blame if he expected to reach the blessed state.

He compared *nirvana* to *Rama Rajya* or the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The dream of *Rama Rajya* was far from realization. The withdrawal of the British power did not mean *Rama Rajya.* How could it happen when they had all along been nursing violence in their hearts under the garb of non-violence?

SALT

Another friend had written to him that he had undertaken the Dandi march and launched a mighty struggle for the removal of the salt tax. The tax had been removed, but the result was that the salt had probably become more costly and more difficult to get. It was a shame, said Gandhiji, that our business community and petty traders tried to make money out of a thing like salt. The Government had to be vigilant about the matter. They could organize the salt works at their disposal so that the people could get salt for the labour put into the production. The officer in charge of the salt department had to see to it that the full benefit of the abolition of the tax went to the public. He blamed also the people for their laziness. They could easily manufacture salt for their own requirements. The poor were free to do so from the time of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. There was no reason why they should be lazy.

It was difficult to find pure salt in the market. It was the easiest thing to purify salt. He had done it himself in jail. One had just to dissolve the salt in a little water and then evaporate the water. It

could be dried in the sun also, but that took a long time. The people themselves could organize manufacture and distribution of pure salt. If they would overcome the temptation of making a profit, they would be able to supply it to the public at a nominal price. But selfishness and corruption were rampant in the land. How could they hope for *Rama Rajya* under the circumstances? It was possible that the Government of the Union of India or of Pakistan might lose its head and reimpose the salt tax. It would be a sad and shameful thing if that happened.

New Delhi 24-7-'47

SMOKING

Gandhiji had noticed that some people were smoking in the prayer ground. Speaking after prayers he said that most of the Christians were given to smoking. Yet no one ever smoked inside a church. Similarly, the Muslims would throw down their cigarettes before entering the mosque. No one could drink inside a mosque. The prayer ground was a Church, Mosque, Temple, Synagogue and *Agiari* combined into one. Correct conduct required that there should be no smoking on the prayer ground and they should all sit quietly from the beginning to the end of the prayers.

NATIONAL FLAG

Speaking of the National Flag Gandhiji said that the A. I. S. A. had stocked national flags worth about two lacs of rupees. They wanted to know what was to happen to those flags in view of the new National Flag. Gandhiji said that the A. I. S. A. was an organization for the service of the poor. It could ill afford to lose property worth two lacs. The Congress or the Constituent Assembly could never do anything which could involve a poor man's organization in such needless loss. The new National Flag was in implication the same as the existing tricolour flag with the *charkha*. So far as he knew, for the sake of the exigencies of design, the wheel was kept without the *mal* and the spindle. He had made enquiries and was told that the new flag would fly on Government buildings and on our ships and embassies abroad. But the people could fly the old flag without any hesitation or hindrance. When the King died, it was said, "The King is dead, long live the King." The Kingship continued. The coins had the impression of the successor king. The old coins, however, bore the same value and were as current as the new ones. The same held true about the existing tricolour. Only the Charkha Sangha branches should now no more manufacture flags with the old design.

CONGRESS AFTER AUGUST 15TH

A friend had written and asked him if the Congress would continue to exist after the 15th August and if so what would be its function and objective. Gandhiji said that the objective of the Congress had so far been the attainment of India's independence through legitimate and peaceful means, or in his language, through truth and non-violence. As he had said already, there had been neither truth nor non-violence in their hearts. He had, however, no doubt that the Congress had to remain even after the 15th August though the objective must be altered. It was now a question of mutual strife or mutual friendship. Today they were cutting one another's throats and were preparing for further slaughter. If such a fight came, it would be worse than during the Mutiny of 1857. In 1857 the masses of India were not awake. That was why he could not participate in the celebrations of August 15th whilst they were getting ready for a blood war among themselves. God forbid that such calamity befell India. If it did, their freedom would be short-lived. Russia, America and Britain and perhaps others also would soon step in and put an end to the newly acquired political freedom.

Dr. Shahriar had come to India to seek the help of Pandit Nehru and Jinnah Saheb. He could only secure moral help which was far superior to that of a legion of soldiers. But he could not secure it if we were at war with one another. India's real contribution would be her moral weight on the side of justice.

India was the home of the Hindus, the Muslims the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Christians and others. The Parsis were driven out of Persia and found shelter in India. Here they were treated as equals. That was the tradition of India. She did not scorn or look down upon the new comers. She just absorbed them.

NATIONAL LANGUAGE

But now there seemed to be a quarrel about the national language. What was it to be? He was told it was to be Hindi written in the *Devanagari* script. Gandhiji could never agree to that. He had been twice President of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. He could not be an enemy of Hindi and Urdu. But he had realized that the language of the common man, the *lingua franca* of India, could only be an amalgamation of simple Hindi and simple Urdu written in the *Devanagari* or the *Urdu* script i. e. Hindustani. He knew many Hindus, leave alone the Muslims, who did not understand Sanskritized Hindi nor could they write in the *Devanagari* script. Therefore, he would stick to Hindustani even if he had to stand alone. The Muslims might regard themselves as the enemies of the Hindus today. India had to win them over, not by servility or appeasement nor yet by enmity. They could do so only through friendship i. e. non-violence of the brave. He could never teach cowardice. He was a staunch Hindu, but his Hinduism taught him equal regard for all religions.

A friend had written to him that now that India had been divided, it could not enjoy the status of a great nation in the world. Gandhiji did not agree with this opinion, if the two parts behaved as brothers and friends.

THE NATIONAL FLAG

(By M. K. Gandhi)

[The article *The National Flag* which appeared in the *Young India* of 13-4-'21, and is referred to in Gandhiji's article in this issue, is reproduced below.]

A flag is a necessity for all nations. Millions have died for it. It is no doubt a kind of idolatry which it would be a sin to destroy. For a flag represents an ideal. The unfurling of the Union Jack evokes in the English breast sentiments whose strength it is difficult to measure. The Stars and Stripes mean a world to the Americans. The Star and the Crescent will call forth the best bravery in Islam.

It will be necessary for us Indians — Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Jews, Parsis and all others to whom India is their home — to recognize a common flag to live and to die for.

Mr. P. Venkayya of the National College, Masulipattam, has for some years placed before the public a suggestive booklet describing the flags of the other nations and offering designs for an Indian National Flag. But, whilst I have always admired the persistent zeal with which Mr. Venkayya has prosecuted the cause of a national flag at every session of the Congress for the past four years, he was never able to enthuse me; and in his designs I saw nothing to stir the nation to its depths. It was reserved for a Punjabee to make a suggestion that at once arrested attention. It was Lala Hansraj of Jullunder, who, in discussing the possibilities of the spinning wheel, suggested that it should find a place on our Swaraj Flag. I could not help admiring the originality of the suggestion. At Bezwada I asked Mr. Venkayya to give me a design containing a spinning wheel on a red (Hindu colour) and green (Muslim colour) background. His enthusiastic spirit enabled me to possess a flag in three hours. It was just a little late for presentation to the All India Congress Committee. I am glad it was so. On maturer consideration, I saw that the background should represent the other religions also. Hindu-Muslim unity is not an exclusive term; it is an inclusive term, symbolic of the unity of all faiths domiciled in India. If Hindus and Muslims can tolerate each other they are together bound to tolerate all other faiths. The unity is not a menace to the other faiths represented in India or to the world. So I suggest that the background should be white and green and red. The white portion is intended to represent all other faiths. The weakest numerically occupy the first place, the Islamic colour comes next, the Hindu colour, red, comes last, the idea being that the strongest should act as a shield to the weakest. The white colour moreover represents purity and peace. Our national flag must mean that or nothing. And to represent the equality of the least of us with the best, an equal part is assigned to all the three colours in the design.

But India as a nation can live and die only for the spinning wheel. Every woman will tell the curious that with the disappearance of the spinning wheel, vanished India's happiness and prosperity. The womanhood and the massess of India have been awakened as never before at the call of the spinning wheel. The masses recognize in it the giver of life The women regard it as the protector of their chastity. Every widow I have met has recognized in the wheel a dear forgotten friend. Its restoration alone can fill the millions of hungry mouths. No industrial development schemes can solve the problem of the growing poverty of the peasantry of India covering a vast surface, 1900 miles long and 1500 broad. India is not a small island, it is a big continent which cannot be converted like England into an industrial country. And we must resolutely set our face against any scheme of exploitation of the world. Our only hope must centre upon utilizing the wasted hours of the nation for adding to the wealth of the country, by converting cotton into cloth in our cottages. The spinning wheel is, therefore, as much a necessity of Indian life as air and water.

Moreover, the Muslims swear by it just as much as the Hindus. As a matter of fact, the former are taking to it more readily than the Hindus. For the Muslim woman is *purdanashin* and she can now add a few *paisas* to the poor resources that her husband brings to the family. The spinning wheel, therefore, is the most natural as it is the most important common factor of the national life. Through it we inform the whole world that we are determined, so far as our food and clothing are concerned, to be totally independent of the rest of it. Those who believe with me will make haste to introduce the spinning wheel in their home and possess a National Flag of the design suggested by me.

It follows that the flag must be made of *khaddar*, for it is through coarse cloth alone that we can make India independent of foreign markets for her cloth. I would advise all religious organizations, if they agree with my argument, to weave into their religious flags, as for instance the Khilafat, a miniature National Flag in the upper left hand corner. The regulation size of the Flag should contain the drawing of a full-sized spinning wheel.

ASHRAM BHAJANAWALI

[*Revised Edition in Hindustani*]

With Gandhiji's Foreword

Price *Annas Eight* Postage etc. *Annas Two*

CONTENTS

		PAGE
HINDI *v.* HINDUSTANI	... M. K. GANDHI	257
GANDHIJI'S SPEECHES	...	258
THE NATIONAL FLAG	... M. K. GANDHI	260
SCHEDULED CASTES	... M. K. GANDHI	261
THE NATIONAL FLAG (*Y. I.*)	... M. K. GANDHI	264
ENGLISH INTO HINDUSTANI — INSTALMENT XXV	...	265
NOTES :		
A TERRIBLE CONTRAST	... M. K. G.	261
CONGRESSMEN AND CONSTRUCTIVE WORK	... S. N.	261

Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Kalupur, Ahmedabad.
Subscription Rates — INLAND One year, Rs. 6: Six months, Rs. 3: FOREIGN : One year, Rs. 8 or 14 sh. or. $ 3.